

Leslieville



**Leslieville Business Improvement Association
Strategic Plan**

December 24, 2019

**Differentiating Leslieville in
Response to Change**

produced by



ThinkFresh Group and Futures Present

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1. Introducing the Strategic Plan

Leslieville BIA is looking for a strategic plan to help guide its future.

The Leslieville BIA was founded in 2013 to enhance the business climate for the main street business of Queen Street East between Jimmie Simpson Park and Vancouver Avenue through branding, marketing, and placemaking activities. As a small and young organization, Leslieville BIA has commissioned the development of a strategic plan to help guide its future. This plan will enable the BIA to:

- Better understand its current context
- Develop a stronger narrative for the businesses it serves
- Assess oncoming opportunities for strategic fit
- Prepare for coming changes to the neighbourhood, both desirable and undesirable

In August 2019, Leslieville BIA selected the ThinkFresh Group and Futures Present team to help it develop this strategic plan. Over the course of 3 months, ThinkFresh consulted the wisdom of BIA members, key neighbourhood stakeholders, other BIAs and residents to paint a picture of where Leslieville is currently at, the challenges that people see coming, and the strengths within the neighbourhood that may be used to grow strategically. With a series of workshops and focus groups, in-person interviews and surveys, ThinkFresh explored the questions, passions, and predictions that make people energetic about the future. The strategic plan that is now being proposed is built on these findings and ThinkFresh's expert assessment of how this could play out.

Throughout this process, there have been glimpses of what ten years may bring

to Leslieville: new transit investments, development of the Unilever East Harbour Site, rent/tax increases, a Netflix studio, many new (and potentially wealthier) residents and an overall narrative of deep change. The consultants have heard stories about what has made Leslieville unique: independent, friendly, gritty, and people-powered; as well as gained insight into how some residents and members understand the values upholding it. Based on this unique neighbourhood intelligence, this report offers guidance through a strategy that is rooted in the present and oriented to the future.

Stating the Problem

At the outset of the project, ThinkFresh engaged with the BIA to clarify a problem statement for the project. There was a desire for a strategic plan that could guide short and medium-term tactics and enable assessment for oncoming opportunities. As stated in the original RFP, a plan needed “to help direct long-range efforts” and help the BIA “stand out from the pack.” These became key success criteria.

Through discovery conversations, we learned that the Leslieville ecosystem is undergoing a time of significant change, with many impacts to business improvement for the region. How might the Leslieville BIA prepare to respond?

Based on what was articulated by the community, the overall problem statement can be conceptualized as such:

How might the Leslieville BIA prepare to advance business improvement by responding to the impacts of ecosystem change?

Underneath this problem statement are two related concerns:

- **How might the Leslieville BIA conceptualize Leslieville as a place that people desire to shop, dine, and obtain services from?**
- **How might the Leslieville BIA strategically respond to change utilizing the assets and strengths at its disposal?**

With these concerns in mind, this strategic plan is designed to help direct the BIA's efforts in response to change while differentiating Leslieville.

The Value of a Strategic Plan

A strategic plan articulates a vision and a shared understanding of what the organization is capable of achieving - creating clarity and alignment. The vision provides a guiding framework for the plan, which supports and coordinates organizational capability through a description of key activities, along with consideration for areas that need further understanding, such as risk mitigation and insight as to how the world may change in response. With this foundation, members can move forward, learning together as they capitalize on the resources they have.

The value of a strategic plan is created through collaboration and depends on ongoing research and engagement. In the community, we build a shared understanding of change, its impacts on business climate, and the various perspectives of BIA stakeholders. This shared understanding and trust enable strategic effectiveness as we organize to act.

Strategic planning is the beginning of a long term commitment. It is a statement to the membership and stakeholders that the BIA plans to build, grow and lead. These goals take time and unexpected conditions add complexity, so a good plan needs to be clear and adaptable. It is important for the BIA to clearly state goals, commitments, and expectations up front as the BIA outlines tactics that members want to be a part of. Otherwise, there may be a tendency to think of the tactics themselves as a panacea and not a component within a larger plan.

The true purpose is to bring people with you - creating the future together.

2. Research process

In the course of building the strategic plan, the Consultant Team engaged in a foresight and human design oriented approach. Such an approach is driven by a desire to deeply understand the current context, background, and issues of the neighbourhood and BIA. The consultants used multiple tactics to understand how people experience this present context and what the identified issues could lead to in the long term.

Over the course of 3 months, the Consultant Team engaged the businesses, residents, and fans of Leslieville – virtually and in-person to establish context, background, and issues. The process proceeded in 5 key stages: Discovery, Context, Foresight, Synthesis, and Reporting which we describe further below:

1. Discovery

The process began with an internal Discovery Workshop with the Board and invited BIA members to talk about what was going on in the BIA and the key issues they were seeing. It was useful for everyone to begin with a vision of the current context of the BIA as an organization and the challenges that it was facing. A summary of the survey results is provided in the online appendix.

2. Context

From this first workshop, we built a detailed online survey asking people inside and outside Leslieville about their thoughts on the neighbourhood, places that they shop at, and their narratives about the community. The main purpose of this was to establish what the community was feeling about the neighbourhood and what they wanted the BIA to address. The survey was administered

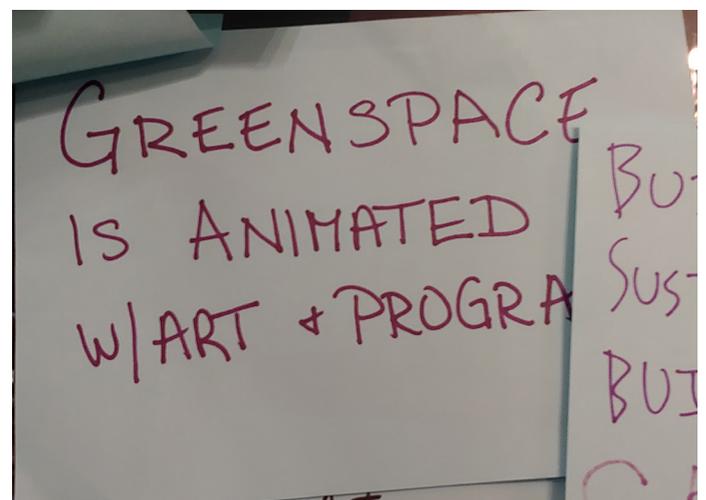
to three self-identified groups: BIA members (which was promoted solely by the BIA directly to its members), residents of Leslieville (defined as living within the area bounded by Coxwell to the east, Lake Shore to the south and the railway tracks to the west and north), and non-residents of Leslieville (defined as living outside of the above-mentioned area). The latter two surveys were widely promoted via email and multiple social media channels and the survey was operated for 10 days in early September 2019. Participation for the three groups were as follows:

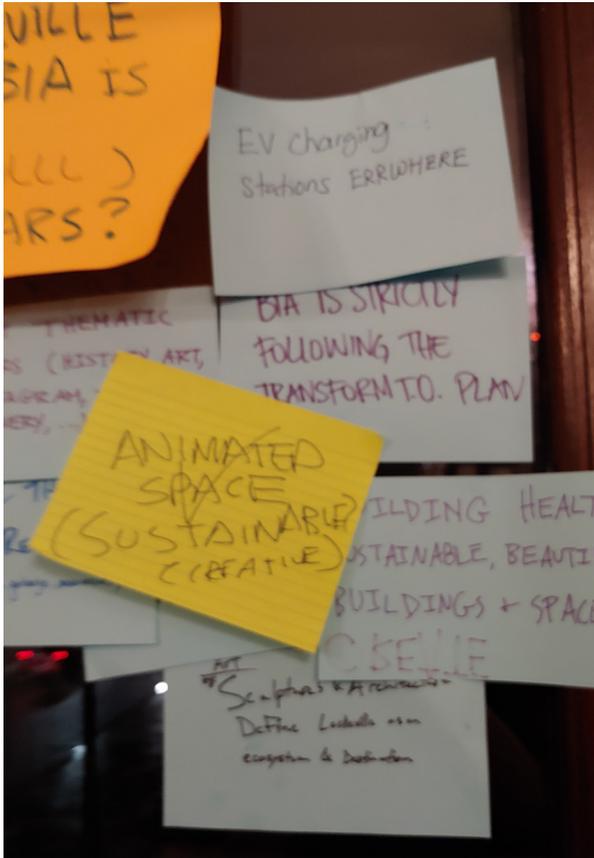
Survey Segment and Number of Participants

BIA Members	18
Leslieville Residents	126
Non-Leslieville Residents	39

3. Foresight

The Consultant Team hosted two Foresight and Design workshops to map out the potential futures for the trends that people were identifying and how they might play out





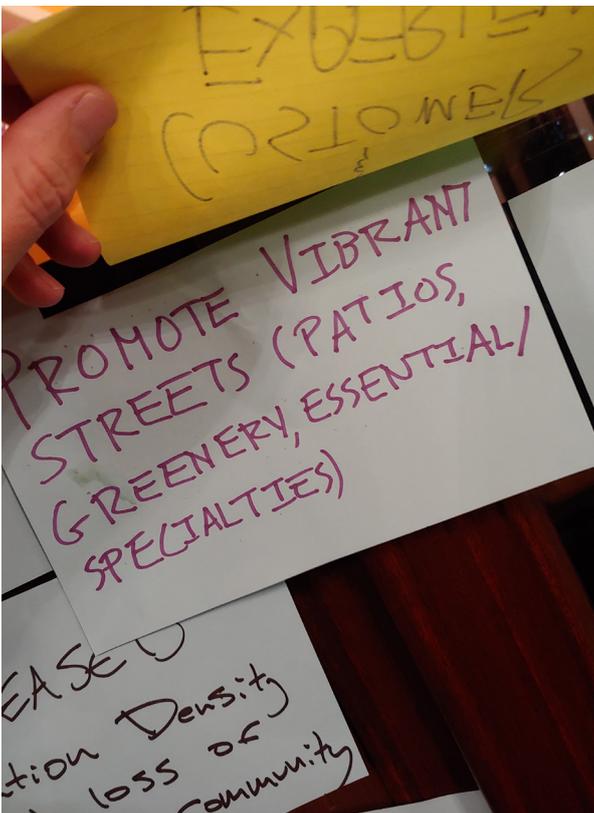
over the next 10 years. The first workshop was more focused on speculative futures while the second workshop examined how these speculative scenarios might play out politically, economically, and culturally. Part of this process is listening, and the Consultants also hosted two open Office Hours in the neighbourhood (at The Dock and Avling Brewery) for people who could not attend the workshops, and performed a walkabout to each business in the BIA to both promote the Foresight and Design workshop and have a chance to chat with the businesses individually. This Foresight stage helped the Consultant Team to comprehend the scale and complexity of the challenges facing the BIA and figure out how to map them into opportunities. The results of the workshops and focus groups can be found in the online appendices.

4. Synthesis

The Consultant Team then began a process of synthesizing all of the inputs into a framework and model to begin to see the strategic outputs. These early models were presented to the Board in late October and the BIA's membership at the AGM in early November, where further inputs were received.

5. Reporting

The process culminated with a final synthesis into this Final Report including the overall strategic framework and plan, which is documented in more detail below.



3. Research summary

The research and consultations point to a series of key current issues, trends, gaps, desires and narratives. These are presented below as the consultant’s synthesis of what has been articulated by the BIA, members and local residents.

Current Issues & Trends

Rent, taxes, and costs are on the rise, Larger corporate entities are moving in, Changing neighbourhood values, Resident makeup changing, Low-density neighbourhood may not support independents, Redevelopment is coming.

Detailed Descriptions

Rent, taxes, and costs are on the rise

There is no doubt that this is the single most anxiety-inducing issue in Leslieville. The cost of real estate, property taxes, and the cost of doing business are increasing, putting pressure on existing retailers and especially independent ones. The future viability of these businesses is at risk, and there are numerous examples to illustrate this today.

Larger corporate entities are moving in

As a result of the cost increases, independents are being slowly replaced with larger, corporate entities - big chains, local chains, and anybody who has the capacity to pay the higher costs of doing business.

Changing neighbourhood values

The above issues inevitably change the values in the neighbourhood both from a cultural perspective and the value proposition of the local businesses. Culturally, larger corporate entities are less “community-oriented” as they don’t necessarily have a neighbourhood-oriented mandate. They may also carry over

cultural norms from other neighbourhoods/ communities they are from or aim to serve - which may be at odds with Leslieville’s existing culture. The value proposition also changes in prices and selection. Smaller corporate entities need to offer higher priced options in order to cover their costs. Larger entities may be able to offer more modestly priced options, but lack the human and “mom and pop” vibe.

Resident makeup changing

Business change is connected also to resident changes. Leslieville has been going through a major resident turnover as older and less wealthy residents move out and younger residents move in. These newer residents may bring wealth, but some are also “house poor” - with little disposable income after their mortgage or rent. There is also an element of many residents working in the “gig economy” with contract based, or even no contract employment. The new businesses that move in make a calculated decision to be in Leslieville following these residents. This may bring in a new set of values that may be different from that which has existed.



Low-density neighbourhood may not support independents

The low-density nature of Leslieville also does not help sustain the local independent businesses. It is clear from the consultants’ interactions with business owners and neighbourhood walkabouts that pedestrian traffic is low. The new boutique mid-rise developments along Queen may not add a lot more foot traffic.



Redevelopment is coming

At the same time, there are larger redevelopments happening around the neighbourhood - such as the East Harbour Unilever site - and there is a sense that further redevelopment along Queen is inevitable. Redevelopment changes the overall streetscape, forces the closure or removal of businesses on its land, and typically raises the rent further in the new retail units. This further feeds into the issues that are described above.

Existing Gaps

Lack of anchor experiences & perceptions, Streetscape gaps, Inconsistent branding, Lack of awareness, Limited BIA capacity, Low membership engagement, Low foot traffic, and Lack of business intelligence and data.

Detailed Descriptions

Lack of anchor experiences & perceptions:

Residents reported a lack of anchoring experiences along Queen. The streetscape fails to deliver any deep or lasting impression that can be leveraged as a draw for a destination. There is also a lack of an anchoring narrative of what the street is about nor are there any anchoring meeting hubs where this narrative is on full display.

Streetscape gaps

Adding to this perception is the physical

disbursement of building uses. There are gaps in the shopping experience along Queen where the street is broken up by residential and institutional uses. This results in the segmentation of the retail on the street. There is also a streetscape gap and misconception along Queen leading from downtown. Coming east along Queen from Yonge, there is a perception that this segment of Queen is quieter and less safe until one reaches the Don River - creating a mental barrier to going east. Further, many people misconstrue Riverside - the first neighbourhood immediately after the Don River - as Leslieville - which may disincentive explorations further east.



Inconsistent branding

The Leslieville brand is best represented through the colourful benches and banners along Queen. However, this is where the brand story of Leslieville BIA needs further development. The values of what these represent do not necessarily show up in the everyday experiences around the BIA. The consultants also note that there are many iterations of the logo - and that the website does not reflect the visual identity on the street.

3. Research summary

Low foot traffic

Foot traffic on Queen Street East in the LBIA was observed to be low in many places and anecdotally doesn't seem to be able to generate the sales necessary to keep local independents shops viable with the rising rents and costs. The foot traffic also tends to be higher at the west end of the BIA but drops off as one moves further east.



Lack of awareness

This also leads to a general awareness issue - many residents responded that they did not know that the BIA existed, what the BIA does or even where it is. Partly because of the streetscape gap issues, but also because of misconceptions reinforced by the real estate sector and the media, many people often confuse Riverside as a part of Leslieville. Municipal signage as recent as the early 1990s calls the region "South Riverdale". The name Leslieville signifies an area much wider than the area the BIA is directly related to.

Limited BIA capacity

Many of the identified issues are much larger than the capacity of the BIA to tackle on its own. Leslieville BIA's small budget and small staff contingent will not be enough to address the expectations of the current membership without a collaborative approach between multiple stakeholder groups.

Low membership engagement

As has been observed by the consultants, and reported by the BIA, engagement with the membership is low. Participation in the survey was only 18 out of 220 members and fewer than 10 members showed up at the AGM.

Lack of business intelligence and data

The BIA lacks sophisticated business intelligence or data about the status of members and the state of business health on the street. There also does not seem to be methods or processes in place to regularly collect such data.

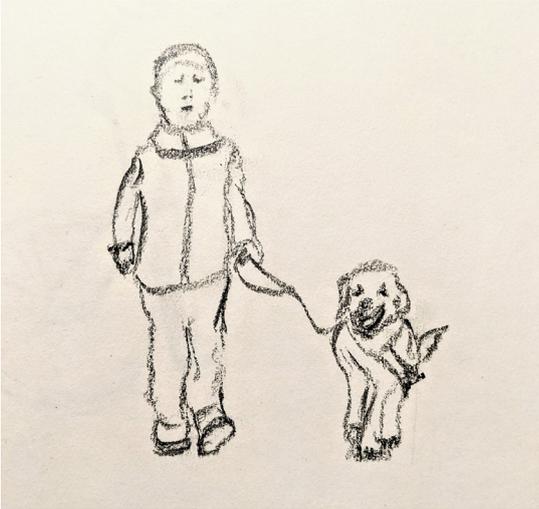
Desires and Narratives

Throughout the research engagement, the top aspirational value that was heard from stakeholders was a desire for the unique character of Leslieville to be cultivated into the future.

Can Leslieville grow its consumer marketplace and navigate development while maintaining local distinctiveness and cultivating its character?

The consultants also learned how stakeholders desired to envision Leslieville's character expressed across political, economic and social dimensions. Three themes emerged which spoke to these values "People Power" for the political dimension, "Exemplary Marketing and Customer Experience" for the economic dimension, and "Build Animated Space (Animated Placemaking)" for the social dimension.

With these insights, the data from our surveys, and our engagement with stakeholders, we began to understand the many narratives that describe Leslieville:



Everyone is Welcome in Leslieville

Leslieville is SOCIAL -- supporting each other, strong social justice, community support, family vibe, “up + coming”, stronger helping each other, fighting for red door and needles in parks, and Tasty Chicken “they have to have somewhere to go, at least we know where they are,” a very active “I am a Leslievillian” Facebook group, changing demographics, school funding vs. household income mismatch, identified as a family-friendly - Visitors, AirBnB, changing demographics happen very quickly and in a big way, desire to grow, mixed housing, more housing, more festivals, more diversity, most people don’t know where the film studios are, signature events, thematic tours, app for matching seniors with students, submerged garbage cans, dog system



Leslieville is a Journey and a Destination

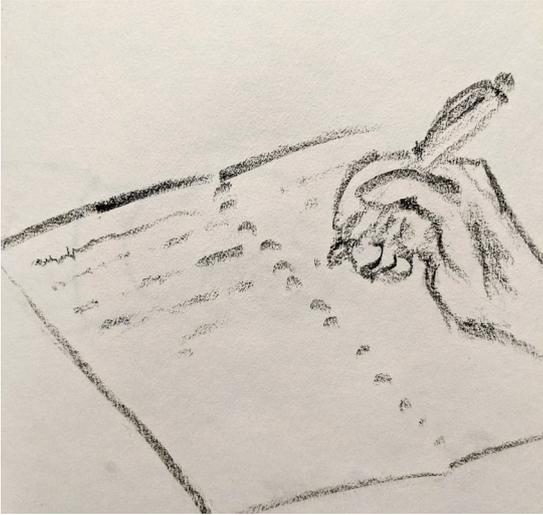
TRANSIT -- bike infrastructure is lacking, bike lanes, need bike parking, TTC, Metrolinx, traffic on Queen, parking

LIVING SPACES -- tree-lined streets, parks, eco-conscious, health & well-being, benches, Jimmy Thompson Park, wish for bridge/ ferry from Leslie Spit to Toronto Island, we don’t have access to water, “create more instagrammable places”

New Industry Town

INDUSTRY -- film studios, GM, Unilever, Netflix, the studios are very isolated, typically catering is not provided from local, the Film Industry is a city of its own

3. Research summary



The Story District

Proximity to studios, a high proportion of film, TV, content and media professionals, film and TV shoots, actors, freelancing creatives working in coffee shops, the characters and stories about them, the high velocity and frequency of demographic changes, comedy clubs and coffee shops

While a placemaking strategy may choose to feature elements from one or more of these narratives, we note that they are not necessarily exclusive to each other, but rather seek to describe some of the diversity of Leslieville.



Leslieville is the Heart and Soul of the city

FEELING -- ephemeral, grit, no big box stores, industrial heritage, eclectic, Leslieville history (we are not Riverside the druggies and dirty, we are not South Riverdale the unwanted) good strong community brand, "up & coming",

Creative and Innovative Commerce Grows Here

How do they survive with people sitting in coffee shops all day? business variety, no big box, food, deserts, "For Lease" and "Closures", more foot traffic during the day, keep small businesses going, more business on the east side of Leslieville, tried to engage with film studios, but they don't seem welcoming, no sense of rising industry sectors.

4. What's the S.C.O.R.E.?

Strengths and Challenges

As seen above, research and analysis surfaced many issues, values, and perspectives, and provided an overall awareness of the BIA's context and situation. To determine a way forward, the consultant team employed SCORE, a strategy formulation method that stands for Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Responses, and Effectiveness. By using this framework to systematically evaluate issues in their context, the consultants synthesized a point of view from which a strategic plan may be proposed. Many insights surfaced during this process, which we outline below.

Strengths

Based on analyzing the received feedback, Leslieville BIA has a good number of strengths both organizationally and within the broader ecosystem that can be leveraged strategically. These are:

Personal relationships, concerned and active residents, well-recognized brand, connection to media, a fairly blank slate, dedicated and experienced board and staff, strong contingent of nearby industries and institutions and a geographic area that is easy to access.

Detailed Descriptions

Personal relationships

The BIA is building some very strong personal relationships with the Councillor, Councillor's staff, local institutions, neighbouring BIAs and active residents.

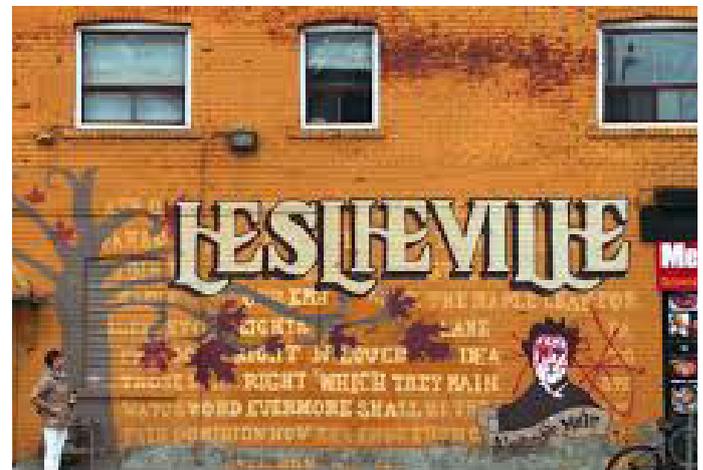
Concerned and active residents

Based on the interactions with local residents, there seems to be a strong desire among residents to help "build up" Leslieville. There is a sentiment around "up and coming",

"community building", "keeping a neighbourly vibe" and embracing the value of resilience that is so much a part of Leslieville's story.

Well-recognized brand

the name "Leslieville" is well recognized across Toronto. Partly due to the real estate sector and the media, Leslieville sells really well around Toronto and is very well recognized. In fact, the feedback that was received talked about how many people who live in Riverside would rather identify with Leslieville.



4. What's the S.C.O.R.E.? Options and Responses

Connection to media

Connected to the local brand, Leslieville is home to and are neighbours to many media-based businesses and workers.

A fairly blank slate

The Leslieville BIA is young and has under the radar recognition in the community. This represents a great strength. The survey to the community found a great response from residents who are eager to build on what they feel about their home. There is an energy to share outside of the business community alone.

Dedicated and experienced board and staff

The BIA has a strong internal team; both the Board and Staff are very dedicated to the cause of business improvement and the neighbourhood. The team also brings strong experiences from other BIAs and being resilient entrepreneurs along Queen Street East.

Strong contingent of nearby industries and institutions

Being close to the centre of Toronto, there are a good number of nearby industries and institutions that represent opportunities for partnerships: film studios, healthcare (Bridgepoint, Toronto East Health Network, South Riverdale Community Health) social service agencies (Woodgreen, Salvation Army), creative industries along Carlaw and Dundas as well as future industries such as Netflix and General Motors.

Easy to access geographically

Leslieville is fairly well connected to the rest of the city and is just east of Downtown Toronto. It is on one of Queen Street which is one of Toronto's iconic streets and the 501 streetcar, is transit accessible, and has easy highway links to the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway.

Challenges

At the same time, there are a number of challenges that would affect how any strategy would roll out. These are:

The issues are bigger than the neighbourhood, BIA being asked to do a lot, timing impacts, innovation is uncertain, tension around what to do, desire for density and visitors and the business turnover is eroding the vibe.

Detailed Descriptions

The issues are bigger than the neighbourhood

As discussed above, the issues that have been identified are bigger than the neighbourhood itself. Many of these issues are happening all around Toronto and many BIAs are asking similar questions around the future, changing neighbourhoods and how to strategically overcome them.

BIA being asked to do a lot

BIAs are traditionally place-based bricks and mortar business promoters with a role in overseeing the improvement and beautification of an area - and this mandate is clearly written into legislation and the governing model for BIAs. However, BIAs are often asked by their members and assumed by communities to be much more than that - at once promoters and improvers, but also community leaders, champions, organizers, and advocates.

Timing Impacts

Due to the complex nature of many of the identified issues, addressing them will take time. The current capacity of the BIA is potentially engaging in a time horizon that may not deliver impacts for any member who is currently struggling. This may have an impact on buy-in from certain parts of the membership.

Innovation is uncertain

Furthermore, engaging in an innovative new way forward is uncertain and introduces a certain element of risk for the BIA. No strategic plan can account for unforeseen circumstances, but the issues and gaps identified above clearly show that the status quo will not solve the problem statements.

Tension around what to do

Ultimately, as an organization that has a mandate to serve its members interests and be an anchor institution, there will inevitably be tension around how to address the issues and the gaps. The consulting team has seen some of this tension up front at the AGM, focus groups and workshops. Through this strategic planning process, the BIA is being provided with guidance on a way forward that aims to address as many issues, gaps and member interests as possible. The BIA will need to take full responsibility for the tactics it enacts, communicate and consult fully with the membership and neighbours in order to manage the tensions until impacts can be felt.

Desire for Density and Visitors

Given the low foot traffic (attributable to streetscape gaps as well as the low development densities) there is a sense that without a new influx of customers from elsewhere, the businesses in Leslieville will not thrive. This is driving a desire to support more density as well as bring in visitors to the neighbourhood. Given that the former has a long lead time, the latter is becoming a desired shorter term solution to the low foot traffic issue.

Business turnover is eroding the vibe

The attraction of what makes Leslieville a unique neighbourhood - independent, resilient, community, creative, friendly - is being eroded by business turnover. Newer corporate entities coming in are not necessarily adhering to these values and this is causing anxiety around

the future vibe of the neighbourhood as well as making it harder to sell this uniqueness as the reason to come to Leslieville.

What does this mean?

This analysis points out a few key things in terms of a strategic plan:

- There is untapped potential in the strengths and with building stronger collaboration over time.
- The institutions and industries in the community are not just partners but potential big customers. Leslieville BIA has room for a strong narrative to tie everything together and provide an anchor for the world to rally around.
- The BIA can really influence these challenges through community building and positioning itself as a go-to player that has the trust and respect of the neighbourhood.

This points to two key areas of focus: building up the organization's capacity, and developing a narrative for placemaking.



Analysis

Options and responses is about laying out different opportunities and showcasing how the BIA as an organization can use these opportunities to respond to the challenges above. The starting point for this is to list out key opportunity frames and then apply a foresight perspective to weave these opportunities into narratives for how they might play out.

Opportunity Frames

The consultants see the following opportunities opening up as part of the roll out of any strategy:

Becoming the Advocate, The Local Business Hub, Narrative Leader, Build on proximity to the studios

Detailed Descriptions

Becoming the Advocate

The BIA could leverage its relationship to local political offices and role as a City of Toronto Board to become an advocate for the issues that it cares about. This would require the BIA becoming more politically active and given the scale and scope of the upcoming challenges, this work would likely occupy a large part of the BIA's time and resources.

The Local Business Hub

The BIA could build out its relationship with the community and the members and be a platform of service for the membership and local business intelligence. In this scenario, the BIA would be the connector to connect businesses to key supports and training and be the link to city services and programs. It could also act as the guardian of the street -

keeping it clean and removing graffiti. Such a role would also occupy much of the BIA's time and resources.

Narrative Leader

One thing that was heard was the need for an anchoring experience or narrative. The BIA could take the lead on constructing a narrative and build on its relationships to align community stakeholders in building out experiences that complement and support the narrative. We note that this will necessitate a lot of selling and workshopping with BIA members and local partners. As a narrative leader, the BIA will engage their community to:

Build creative storytelling

Promote creative and local stories that are all around Leslieville.

- **Unify the streetscape**
Make the streetscape more cohesive and tied to a strong narrative.
- **Partner, Partner, Partner:**
Invite strategic partners into BIA projects.
- **Lead in service innovation**
Be a leader in the provision of service to members that goes beyond providing a platform but helps them grow and succeed.

Build on proximity to the studios

Leslieville is sitting in a unique space in Toronto as the closest residential neighbourhood to one of Toronto's largest economic and cultural drivers that operate in a city with over 300 film festivals. The consultants note that a storymaking narrative anchored to film, TV, interactive media, and innovation in the arts may have potential in Leslieville because:

- Film, TV, and creative storytelling have a deep history in Leslieville.
- As a large industry with no official "production district" in Toronto, it may be

able to anchor Leslieville as a destination for tourism.

- There is currently energy behind this idea with the board.
- There is a higher concentration of film, TV and interactive media professionals in and around the Leslieville region.
- Celebrities live in the neighbourhood
- Netflix is moving into the region
- The studios are located within walking and cycling distance
- TV shows and films use the storefronts, restaurants, side streets regularly
- Netflix may want to encourage this as a public extension of their brand, and to attract talent
- In 2016, film investments in Toronto totalled over \$2 Billion, employing over 30,000 people and the city is heavily promoted by the municipal government as a filming destination, which is expected to continue to grow these numbers.
- Toronto is evolving its citywide place-branding strategy with a view to promoting 2021 as the year of public art.

Additional Considerations

While there is no denying the potential power of a place brand designed to leverage the cultural equity of film, any such tactic will require significant investment, and warrants its own strategic consideration and planning. Some additional contextual considerations as such an option is assessed may include:

- Two new studios are coming to Mississauga
- Toronto has claimed the Film Lives Here

concept, Yorkville and TIFF already claimed the red carpet

- There is no rep cinema that generates a following of film lovers in the BIA
- Film, TV, and interactive media professionals live and work dispersed throughout the GTA, including Hamilton
- There is no destination between Eastern and Queen that is bringing foot traffic towards Queen street
- The boundaries of the BIA are smaller than the commonly regarded territory, a territory that has film, television, and other media studios

Responses

Weaving all of this together: what might the future look like? And, most importantly, as this story unfolds, how might the ecosystem respond?

Having identified a variety of options using the narrative and staging opportunities outlined above, this section explores and discusses four speculative futures scenarios, organized here according to the key value themes identified by the BIA's stakeholders and the proposed narrative around storymaking. These are meant to inform reflection and inspire generative insights, rather than to be exclusive or comprehensive by themselves.

Scenario 1

Leslieville, Stories are Made Here



What this highlights

Priority: Animated Placemaking - Activating Community Connection and Vibrant Spaces

Long-term goal: to have a dedicated space; with a cinema, networking venues, desk rentals, writers retreats to solidify the reputation for this distributed community.

Possible Future

In the year 2022, BIA has a reputation for being supportive to the creative industry makers and storytellers.

The area is known for its intrigue and layers of history that change in rapid and surprising ways. If you peer underneath the street addresses, names of shops that can be seen in other places across town, and high priced smoothies, you will find some of the most interesting characters in the city. There are people who have been here through the grittiest of times, the rise of Lesbianville, the sexy days of the photo studios, and the settling of street crime as new homeowners replace the anxious unemployed. They are all good fodder for great stories. The evening restaurants and bars are open during the day for Flexday pass holders and as soon as a "for lease" sign goes up on a storefront, a cafe assumes responsibility for it to provide overflow seating for customers that intend to stay and work for hours.

Potential Pro's - coffee shops have more space for customers as the writers move to temporary for lease locations with free wifi.

Potential Con's - the pre- and post-production activities do not necessarily attract the excitement of seeing actors or live shoots, therefore an increase in tourism may not be measurable

What are some Immediate tactics that the BIA could do to support Scenario 1 Leslieville, Stories are Made Here?

Using existing online and print media to promote local fiction and non-fiction writing, poetry, news, and others.

- For example: community-powered local news site The Discourse supports in-depth journalism and are accountable to diverse communities, they are contributing to a more equitable democracy.
- For example: Wattpad, an online fan fiction social media site, heralded for giving a voice to under-represented communities in publishing
- For example: leverage the retired publisher of the Leslieville newspaper to pass along his knowledge to build a new paper

Proactive support and added value for local actors, written, shot films, post-production, and musicians with networking, residency spaces, meetup groups that draw professionals from all over the city.

Encourage city wide culture festivals to feature Leslieville as a hub of activity, such as Contact Photography festival, Luminato, Nuit Blanche, Fall for Dance

Using vacant storefronts as temporary workspaces for self-directed residencies for artists, musicians, and writers. This could be a model like a Breather pop-up work space venue, Firefly Studios membership, or temporary rough and ready locations like Stakt This also relieves some of the burden on coffee shops that are workspaces for people who sit solo for hours and purchase only one coffee.

Scenario 2 Investment Dollars Grow in Leslieville

What this highlights

Priority: Exemplary Marketing & Customer Experience - Connecting the Dots between Businesses for Growth and Customer Value

Long-term goal: create a feeling of pride of place with input from external stakeholder groups to help BIA members demonstrate their unique value

Possible Future

In the year 2026, the Leslieville BIA became recognized across North America as the best on location turnkey solution to produce film, for any sized budget.

The Leslieville Business Improvement Area is a gold mine of untapped potential for film and television assets. It has unique charms with art on telephone poles, the large storefront windows right at sidewalk level, and dated facades. These are backdrops that could easily be adapted to serve any era for the last 100 years. A production company, director or location scout looking for a turnkey solution between vendors and film production, has confidence in the BIA supports a pro-film industry as a value. IATSE and the Director's Guild are thrilled to have the neighbourhood that they already call home supporting film in Ontario. The owners of local businesses are paid to have their facade changed by the studios, and choose the City of Toronto's facade improvement program to capture attention with unique storefronts. The BIA provides a

4. What's the S.C.O.R.E.? Four scenarios

time saving service for film producers with a la carte concepts. They value the service that helps them pick and choose from a menu of receptive locations because the BIA serves as a responsible connector between businesses and producers.

Potential Pros - advice for ways that small production companies save time and money in obtaining permits and negotiating with locations

Potential Cons - there could be politics in the relationship between BIA and locations that are under-utilized

What are some Immediate tactics that the BIA could do to support Scenario 2 Investment Dollars Grow in Leslieville?

Connect with both Toronto Film Office and Film Ontario. In both cases there may be financial capability, advice, and capacity to market BIA within existing marketing channels

Perhaps feature collections of buildings/ locations, or case study of past activities - 'headshots' of great locations

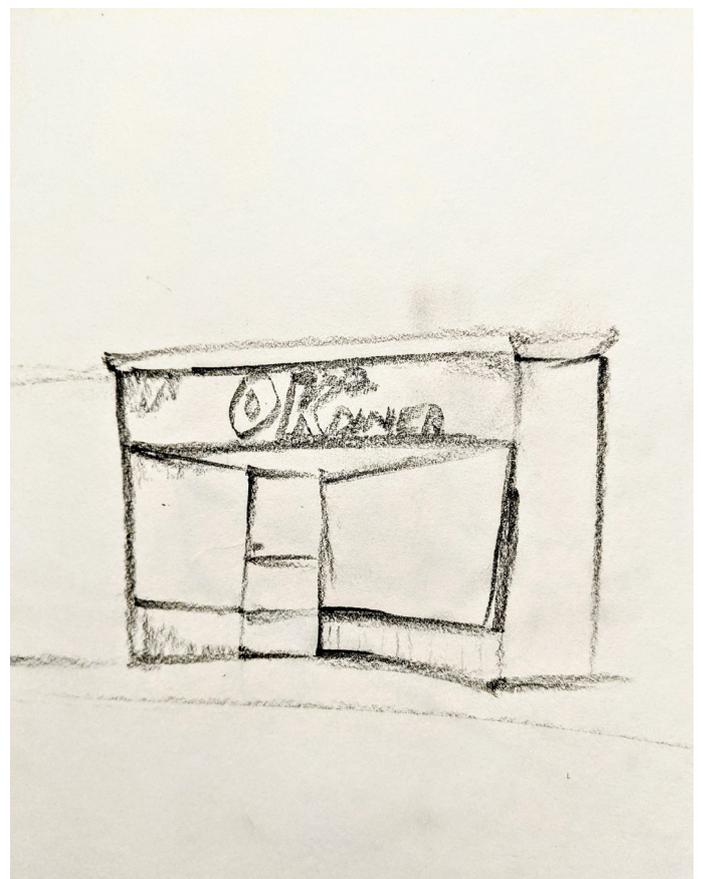
Connect local membership of US and Canadian directors that BIA is "open for business"

Currently, many residents find the industry to be a nuisance. The BIA could build bridges between the industry and residents; for example the BIA could help connect film industry players with residents' associations to sponsor/fund local events. Reach out to well established organizations that have a vested interest in film production in Canada to find

out how the Leslieville BIA can provide help with existing assets at low cost.

For example:

- IATSE
- Directors Guild of Canada
- TIFF
- TV production companies
- Canadian Film Centre
- Heritage Canada
- Canadian Film Board
- CTV
- Colleges and universities



Scenario 3

Thanks to our sponsors, Leslieville is alive 24/7/365



What this highlights

Priority: PEOPLE POWER - Aligning Small Business and Community Dynamics to Unify Voice

Long-term goal, create a deep business intelligence database that could be used for sponsorship from any industry.

Possible Future

In the year 2023 Leslieville has a physical infrastructure and permanent digital integration for major events with onsite activations for a major event, which extend digitally far outside of Leslieville.

The CMO of Netflix sees new opportunities with outdoor screens and projections in surprising and delightful locations that recreate the shared experience of watching regularly scheduled TV. Media buyers, corporate real estate companies, and major sponsors are excited to come to Leslieville to build stronger relationships in a distinctly Canadian context. They spend their marketing dollars with Leslieville's own interactive digital media smart city. They are provided with custom sponsorship opportunities from a neighbourhood that knows what it wants, who is of value to their business ecosystem. New businesses know what the benefit of their company will be on the well being of their employees in Leslieville, a year round destination. Netflix sponsors a Walk of Fame, and GM creates electric vehicle charging stations that have a distinct Leslieville design.

Potential Pros - could become the largest integrated marketing platform in North America

Potential Cons - BIA could become responsible for the hardware and servicing of the technology

4. What's the S.C.O.R.E.? Four scenarios

What are some Immediate tactics that the BIA could do to support Scenario 3 Thanks to our sponsors, Leslieville is alive 24/7/ 365?

Provide robust business intelligence to commercial real estate groups and media buyers

Polling local businesses and residents for what kind of business they want in the BIA and target them with sponsorship placements on physical and digital integrated screens

Present a united voice to government bodies such as trade commissions and Ministry of Economic Development that includes renewable sponsorship options with major media exposure, marketing package “why filmmaking in BIA is easy”

Scenario 4 *Leslieville - Get into the story*

What this highlights

Priority: EXEMPLARY MARKETING & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE - Connecting the Dots between Businesses for Growth and Customer Value

Long-term goal: create unique tour packages that attract visitors for several activities



Possible Future

In 2020 Leslieville is the place where film buffs go to feel the thrill of film and TV production in the city of Toronto.

People who come for TIFF or Hotdocs need landmarks to round out their film buff experience. Not the red carpet watchers, but the ones who want to peek into the back lot. They tour Leslieville finding instagrammable moments. On the street they walk past the rotating installations of film sets like Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice or X-Men. They sit in a cafe that is attached to Thunder Thighs. They get to be extras in indie films. It's fans who walk a mile in the shoes of a creator. An organization holds one-day workshops/ behind the scenes look at professional sound, lighting and camera equipment.

What are some Immediate tactics that the BIA could do to support Scenario 4 Leslieville - Get into the story?

Get business to come up with interactive experiences that lead visitors from one destination to another across the BIA

Film themed Leslieville dollars for different groups "The Bridesmaid" or "I Love Your Work"

- For example - "Pretty in Pink" florist special, with Scotch and Soda red berry smoothies, cupcake making classes and pedicures

Identify and support local business who want to add to their tourist quotient, i.e.. sponsor locations that are willing to increase the allure of the media production. Signed posters, movie props

Rooftop cinema on top of studios and gallery walks in back alleys

Promote workshops in the art and craft of film and video making

Bringing it all together - Effectiveness

As everything in the above analysis is tied together, the question becomes: What will help the BIA to be effective in rolling out this strategy?

Effectiveness is developed by considering a number of key factors, such as efficiency, reliability, elegance, appropriateness and integration. An effective organization holds the mission for all of the stakeholders in the BIA, both now and into the future. This involves holding and leading on the following objectives:

- 1. Building trust**
Becoming a trusted representative and authority on key community issues that intersect with BIA interests
- 2. Organizing the community to act**
Acting as a platform to help the community organize around issues that intersect with BIA interests.
- 3. Coming together on a narrative**
Convening, consulting and building out a chosen narrative
- 4. Promoting the narrative**
Leading on the promotion of the narrative as it pertains to local businesses
- 5. Innovating in service to the narrative**
Building new methods and processes in service to the narrative: narrative themed events, guidelines on how members can help brand around the narrative etc.

This also requires taking into account what the BIA can action, influence and advocate for. The following diagram and chart documents the current state of these dynamics. At the top are the issues that a BIA can directly control through action and these are the domains that a BIA has been assigned power over either through legislation or policy. Underneath are the issues that a BIA can influence directly through its reputation and relationships and issues that a BIA can only advocate for with less certain results.

The interesting thing to note is that by building trust throughout the development of the BIA within its community, many domains where the organization may currently only advocate can transition to become areas of influence. This is because the trust that has now accrued to the BIA allow it to be more authoritative in the eyes of decision makers. The reverse situation can also happen when trust erodes. The long-term goal would be to transition as many items from the advocacy list to the influence list and the recommended strategic plan in the next section is built with this in mind.

What the LBIA can control through actions, influence, and advocate for.



Can you move more things that you can advocate for into what you can influence or control?

What the BIA can control through action

- Marketing & branding -> ultimately awareness of the BIA and neighbourhood
- Connecting people and organizations together
- Supporting businesses, gathering local intelligence
- Convening stakeholders to plan for the future
- Running events
- Collaborating with others
- Providing advice to the Councillor/Council
- Neighbourhood enhancements within your BIA area

What the BIA can influence

- Streetscape planning/design
- Area planning (city planning)
- Public space location and design
- Transportation (as it pertains to the BIA's area)
- Business composition

What the BIA can advocate for

- Development proposals
- Business composition - especially who a landlord rents to
- Transport (when it does not pertain directly to the BIA's area)
- Schools/Education
- Property Taxes
- Vacancies
- Safety/policing
- Neighbourhood character
- Neighbourhood equity
- Management around undesirable elements
- Neighbourhood change outside of your BIA area (e.g.: Sidewalk Labs, The Beaches etc.)

5. Our Recommended Strategy

Based on insights gleaned from research and engagement throughout the Leslieville BIA and community, the consultant present the following recommended strategy. The strategy entails a set of statements which articulate recommended Vision & Mission, Values & Principles, Anchoring Narrative, Goals, Strategic Objectives & Tactics for the Leslieville BIA. Guidance is provided on tactical implementation, as well as a set of priority tactical activity recommendations aligned to the articulated goals.

Upon review and confirmation of the strategy, the Consultant can work collaboratively with the BIA board in defining a high level tactical work plan with year by year milestones.

Vision & Mission

Storymakers. Iconoclasts. Authentic Stories Live Here

We envision the Leslieville main street as an iconoclastic cultural destination, anchored to its heritage of stories: distinctive stories of entrepreneurial creativity and resilience through time, (such as George Leslie's Nursery or the Wrigley Factory) that is expressed in the modern context most notably through film, TV and media making and the arts, which are industries that still live in Leslieville.

To enable this vision, we activate and connect our community of business owners, peer organizations, industry partners and residents into a platform for placemaking and economic development that delivers a top tier destination brand and service experiences.

Values & Principles

In stewardship of this vision we are creative, entrepreneurial, collaborative, trustworthy, community oriented, authentic and resilient. We believe in and prioritize the principles of:

People Power Aligning small business and community agents towards a unified voice

Exemplary Marketing & Customer Experience Connecting the dots between businesses for growth and customer value

Animated Placemaking Activating community connection and vibrant spaces

Anchoring Narrative

Honouring Leslieville's rich heritage of creative entrepreneurship through film and the arts, we seek to anchor our placemaking and economic development initiatives to the concept of Leslieville as Toronto's "Story District" - a cultural destination and industry hub which celebrates story making and the human spirit expressed through forms including film, television, writing and art.

Goals, Strategic Objectives, & Tactics

Lead and Influence, Serve our Members, Make a Destination, Represent Broadly, and Keep the Vibe Alive

The following are goals, derived from our analysis, that describe distinct areas for strategic action that the BIA can begin putting into action. The consultants advise that the board meet to discuss these goals to open up where the value to members lies deepest. Together the BIA can flesh out these ideas into an action plan. There are a lot of possibilities for members, volunteers, residents and outside partners to be a part of this.

Goal 1: Lead and Influence

Goal 2: Serve Our Members

Goal 3: Make a Destination

Goal 4: Represent Broadly

Goal 5: Keep the Vibe Alive

Goal 1: Lead and Influence

Objectives

Build trust to be the leader on local business issues and the influencer for these issues

Become a transformative entrepreneur for Leslieville the business and brand

Reset the narrative about the BIA from what it is today. Make the BIA less unknown and lacking presence.

Move more issues from the “Advocate” to “Influence” column

Agile intelligence: Build capability to maintain a pulse on ecosystem change and stakeholder needs and opportunity

Tactics

Build strategic partnership development capability - includes activities such as planning, implementation of a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) and the creation of communication assets.

- Map out your community institutions and partners.
- Begin crafting pitches tailored to potential partners

Create a database for insights and intelligence gathering - every engagement and event needs both a quantitative and qualitative data collection plan outlining what types of intelligence can be collected. Run an annual survey to keep this data up to date.

- Begin with a broad member survey, tailored with metrics designed for benchmarking these goals and narratives

- Explore intelligence sharing with other partners - propose a shared data strategy that can help everybody reduce costs

Develop tailored communication and engagement strategies for industry, member, resident, community and consumer segments

- Develop a detailed communication and messaging plan
- Begin to share the strategic plan with the community broadly

Goal 2: Serve Our Members

Objectives

Lead through service

Build trust as the local hub and service provider for businesses

Tactics

- Hold office hours and visible public presence on the street (office). Promote these initially as Strategic Plan Information Sessions.
- Implement a member business marketing program, which integrates featured stories about specific businesses into the broader place-branding campaign. Engage heavily with members around their participation in this marketing opportunity.
- Presence in community conversations - attend meetings and be an advisor with other community groups
- Create a volunteer program to interface with community volunteers who want to help build up the BIA.
- Welcome package for all new members
- Annual Members handbook
- Cleanliness program: regular street clean-ups, encourage members to keep their space clean, provide support for members to remove graffiti
- Animate collaboration by maintaining an open repository of member concerns and ideas - allow members to vote on ideas for services, and invite members to join working groups focused on specific peer to peer business development solutions

Goal 3: Make a Destination

Objectives

Become an example of marketing and customer experience

Establish and maintain the narrative

Build animated spaces

Tactics:

- Expand the BIA north and east to include Coxwell and Carlaw
- Build a Leslieville social media ambassadors program
- Create instagrammable moments, leverage store front windows for visual display competitions
- Fully roll out Leslieville Dollars program
- Create a Leslieville newspaper with news and stories about members businesses
- Seasonal parklettes
- Permanent unique bike infrastructure
- Wayfinding and directional signage
- Value added services: delivery within the neighbourhood, between businesses
- Unified brand guidance and colours throughout Queen
- Interesting streetscape details such as lighting, sidewalks,
- Create opportunities for city wide festivals such as Contact photography festival, Luminato, Nuit Blanche, TIFF
- Pop Up Shop Program for vacant store fronts

- Provide space, support and advice for BIA members to collaborate and host their own events.

Goal 4: Represent Broadly

Objectives

Represent the interests of our BIA

Visibly stand for the needs of members

Seek to resolve any conflicts with neighbours and community stakeholders to advance trust.

Tactics

- Elevate and position the member voice in marketing and communications
- Research and capture civic, industry and neighbourhood intelligence data to support advocacy and influence on member issues.
- Lead the conversation on the future by generating awareness across stakeholder segments of future changes.

Goal 5: Keep the Vibe Alive

Objectives

Leslieville's vibe: independent, resilient, community, creative, friendly. As the BIA, we live these values, not just in the neighbourhood but in what we do.

Stop the bleed: change is inevitable, but we maintain our values by influencing the values of who comes in and cultivating Leslievillian values among our current members. Help members build capacity.

Mount a Challenge: Seek stand-out innovative placemaking and economic development partners

Tactics

- Connect with, boost and curate user generated social media content
- With business intelligence about neighbourhood shopping patterns, provide reports to local landowners to influence who they select as tenants
- Build events based on the core values
- Create a guide for members that focuses on how to align events and promotions to the anchor narrative and core values
- Implement Digital Main Street programs as a way to help members build capacity by digitizing and automating routine functions

6. Next Steps

Guidance for tactical Implementation

The strategies and tactics presented in this report position the Leslieville BIA as a leader in placemaking and economic development. They are designed to make a difference through collaboration and should be assessed accordingly. Becoming a leader involves having the courage to put forward a bold vision, and execute with resilience. The good news is that the BIA has valuable community assets to work with.

Even if the Leslieville BIA had a large marketing budget, excellent designers, and strong political allies, it would still need to collaborate in creating stories that connect, activate the community, and build Leslieville into the go-to neighbourhood of the East-end. The challenge will always be bringing people together to think sustainably for the significant changes ahead.

As you craft and assess your tactical milestones, the consultants recommend the following assessment criteria to ensure that operations reflect the spirit of this strategy. Each tactical and functional work plan should:

- Be forward looking
- Respond to challenge
- Resolve systemic tensions
- Create options
- Demonstrate value
- Manage risk
- Build trust
- Generate momentum
- Enable leverage
- Be adaptable
- Be sustainable
- Meet the capacity you have

6. Next Steps

Finally, while certain tactics may have been tried in the past, the consultants note that they may not have been aligned with an overarching narrative and framed within a larger strategy at that time. This would have limited their effectiveness. The consultant team encourages the BIA to evaluate these recommended tactics on their own merits within this new strategic planning context, as they may now more easily integrate into a new narrative and higher level goals that members can really see themselves a part of.

In order to begin this, there is a need for some quick wins that start to showcase the trust and leadership that the BIA wants to build with members and the community. The section below presents a list of “low hanging fruit” tactics that could be prioritized immediately towards this objective.

Prioritized tactics

- Map out community institutions and partners
- Begin crafting pitches tailored to potential partners
- Create a Welcome Package for all new members focused on what the BIA can do for them
- Create an Annual Members handbook
- Hold office hours and visible public presence on the street (office). Promote these initially as Strategic Plan Information Sessions for the members.
- Fully roll out Leslieville Dollars program
- Create a Leslieville newspaper with news and stories about members businesses
- Provide space, support, and advice for BIA members to collaborate and host their own events.
- Lead the conversation on the future by generating awareness around the neighbourhood of future changes
- Create a guide for members that focuses on how to align events and promotions to the anchor narrative and core values
- Connect with, boost, and curate user generated social media content
- Set a date for the Board to set goals and create action plans

7. Acknowledgements

The consultants would like to thank the Leslieville BIA Board and the BIA members for their feedback, support, advice and guidance through this strategic planning process. A particular acknowledgment goes out to everyone in the community who came out to the events in person, and all of the survey, workshop and focus group respondents who so diligently and eagerly shared their thoughts on the neighbourhood and the challenges that they were seeing. Special thanks to BIA Co-ordinators Dominic Cobran, Cathy Quinton and Board Chair Christiane Tetreault for your wisdom and advice on how to make this a meaningful strategy for the BIA.

8. Appendix

A - Case Studies

Parkdale Village BIA

The Danny BIA

Kensington Market BIA

B - Discovery Sessions, Foresight & Discovery Workshops & Community Office Hours

C - Leslieville BIA Survey Results Summary

D - Focus Group Summary

Case Study Parkdale Village BIA

Getting Practical

Context & Local Community

Parkdale Village BIA covers the west end of Queen Street between Dufferin Street and Roncesvalles Ave, representing over 250 businesses. The BIA formed in 1978. The BIA currently has one Executive Director and part-time roles, as funding permits.

Parkdale is a highly engaged community where there are many active local groups working on various community and social objectives. Much of this stems from the neighbourhood's history as a low-income and newcomer area with many boarding and rooming houses. As gentrification has started to impact Parkdale, the community has become very organized and innovative – for example, forming Canada's first urban community land trust, organizing rent strikes and creating a community-led Planning Study. The BIA has been involved in many of these initiatives and groups, participating as a member on various committees and attending public meetings.

Strategies & Issues

As with many BIAs, member engagement is an issue and, despite its long history in the neighbourhood, the BIA continuously works on keeping its membership engaged. One of the major steps in improving engagement and planning for the future was the completion of a comprehensive membership and community survey of all businesses, properties and

community organizations that fell within the BIA boundaries in 2017. This included hiring summer students to visit each business to fill out the survey. The BIA recognized the value of delivering immediate value to members by addressing their most pressing and visible concerns.

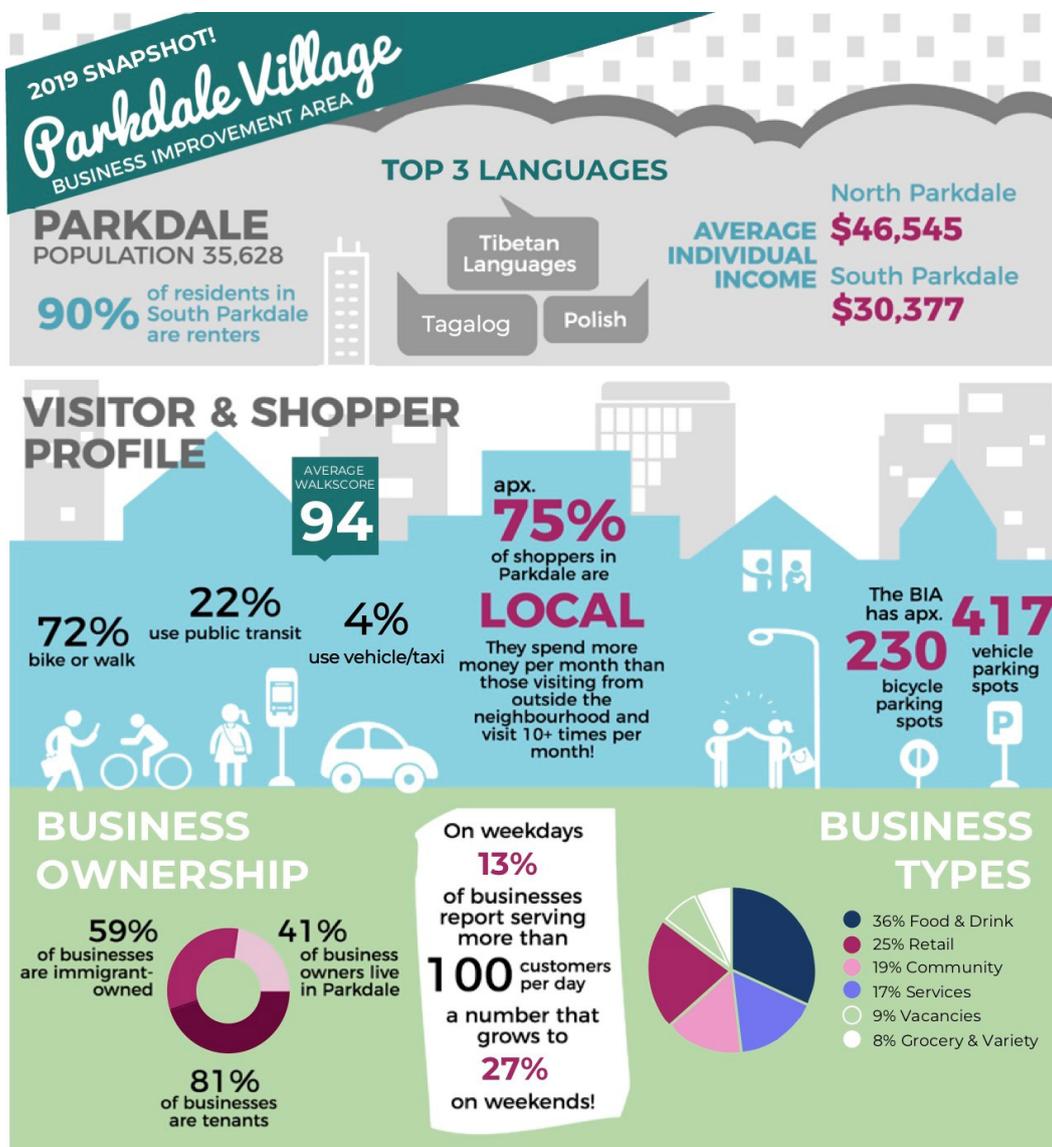
The result was a rich snapshot of what was in the BIA's territory, member needs and priorities and a better understanding of customers and visitors. This allowed the BIA to develop a detailed series of strategic directions, and via a series of further engagements with members refine out the specifics of what to tackle, which are often the most visible (and sometimes small) things like graffiti removal or cleaning up cigarette butts. The BIA summarized this information into a series of easy to understand infographics and planning documents.

The BIA fully recognizes that capacity is a major challenge and has built their strategies around what is feasible & practical. The 5-year plan includes tasks which are “must do” and what could be done if time and resources permit. Much of this relies on BIA staff, but also partnerships and moving things around as opportunities come up by chance. There is also the recognition that funding applications can take time and this time is built into the planning.

Relationship development is a core part of the BIA's operations. This starts with establishing the BIA's presence and value to its members through publishing and distributing an annual member's handbook with useful and basic information about the BIA and Parkdale. The BIA is also a service hub - often acting as an unofficial surrogate for the local Councillor - receiving issues and concerns from anybody who walks in (member or non-member)

and tries to connect them with the right people. As mentioned above, the BIA is also active in local groups, works with them and sometimes makes donations as a means to advance interests where the BIA might be restricted by existing rules or political considerations.

The BIA has made strong use of social media as a way to connect with members and promote the area. Instagram is a preferred platform as it is very easy to boost user generated content and save time for the BIA creating their own content. It has also been a very handy tool to keep check on what's going on – issues, controversies and intelligence in real time.



The Parkdale Village BIA was established in 1978 as 1 of over 80 BIAs across Toronto and represents businesses and property owners along Queen St West from Dufferin St to Roncesvalles Ave.



Parkdale Village Business Improvement Area
 1313 Queen St West
 www.parkdalevillagebia.com

Sources: Bike Lanes, On Street Parking and Business in Parkdale: A study of Queen Street West in Toronto's Parkdale Neighbourhood (2016); Parkdale Community Economic Development Business Survey (2015); Parkdale Planning Study Report (2016); Census / National Household Survey (2011); Parkdale Village Business Improvement Area Inventory Reports (2018); Walkscore.com aggregated data (2018). This report is provided for informational purposes only. The information contained herein is from sources we believe to be reliable. However some data fluctuates and is subject to interpretation.

Case Study The Danny BIA

Relationships and Value Delivery

Context & Local Community

The Danny BIA is the operating brand of the Danforth Mosaic BIA which covers Danforth Avenue from Jones Avenue to Westlake Avenue, just west of Main Street. Formed in 2008, it is the longest BIA in the old City of Toronto at 2.9 km, representing 600 businesses. The BIA has one full-time Manager.

The area has a similar family and community vibe to Leslieville with lots of local community events. The Danny works with the Danforth East Community Association (DECA) on issues of common interest such as shop vacancies. They often sponsor DECA events such as the Festival of Lights and work to promote each other's events. It wasn't always this way though – in the past there was tension over territoriality on common objectives. The Danny has also had some success working with the Danforth East BIA to the east but more limited success with Greektown on the Danforth to the west.

Strategies & Issues

The BIA builds trust, value and relationships with its members by showcasing how it delivers for the neighbourhood, facilitates success and connects members to

opportunities. Because the BIA has limited capacity, it often delivers through sponsorship – financially or otherwise – and supporting causes where there is an alignment between community desire and business promotion. By doing so, they have been able to be a part of many community activities as a sponsor, which gets their name out in the neighbourhood.

The BIA also takes risks to be part of new events/ideas that have yet to be tested but have good promotional potential. This is how the BIA started The Danny Loves Music series and their recent involvement in Nuit Blanche,

These have brought lots of new people to the neighbourhood. These successes then bring in more participation once members see the value.

A key aspect of this is making connections and, as the Manager calls it “having a good ground game.” He regularly consults with members on the street or in their shops, and connects them to opportunities. For example, he promotes the City's Façade Improvement program and Digital Main Street as this is essentially free money and support for the members. By being the conduit that helps them navigate these programs and get a tangible benefit, the BIA is seen in a positive light. The BIA also regularly promotes its work to demonstrate its progress and success.

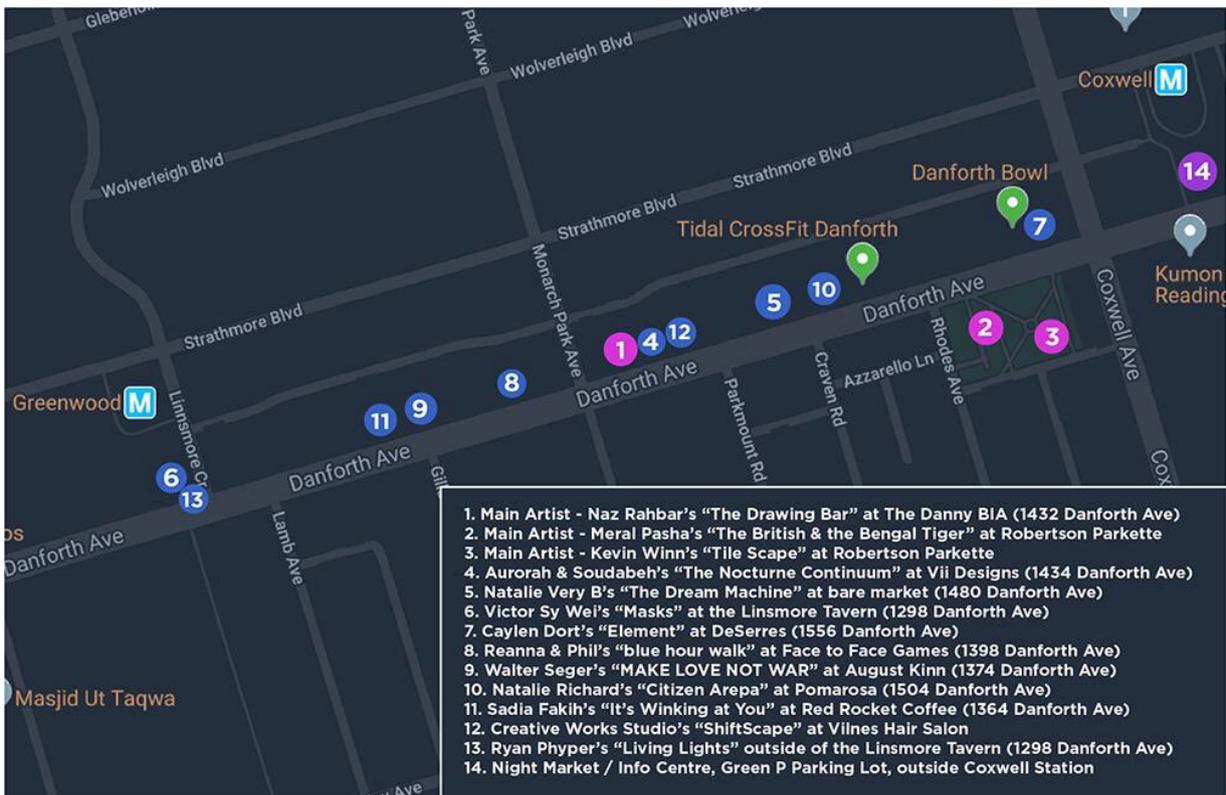
Another aspect of The Danny's strategy is to be a bit controversial and eclectic. Even the name The Danny continues to elicit debate amongst community members – which is seen as a good thing as it continues to bring attention and presence for the area. The Danny is also a long and very diverse strip of businesses – which helps it project an eclectic vibe as there is no unifying story. As the

Manager stated about The Danny's success:
 "Stay weird and don't be afraid to make fun of yourself!"



THE DANNY LOVES MUSIC SERIES

image credit: Danforth Mosaic BIA



1. Main Artist - Naz Rahbar's "The Drawing Bar" at The Danny BIA (1432 Danforth Ave)
2. Main Artist - Meral Pasha's "The British & the Bengal Tiger" at Robertson Parkette
3. Main Artist - Kevin Winn's "Tile Scape" at Robertson Parkette
4. Aurorah & Soudabeh's "The Nocturne Continuum" at Vii Designs (1434 Danforth Ave)
5. Natalie Very B's "The Dream Machine" at bare market (1480 Danforth Ave)
6. Victor Sy Wei's "Masks" at the Linsmore Tavern (1298 Danforth Ave)
7. Caylen Dort's "Element" at DeSerres (1556 Danforth Ave)
8. Reanna & Phil's "blue hour walk" at Face to Face Games (1398 Danforth Ave)
9. Walter Seger's "MAKE LOVE NOT WAR" at August Kinn (1374 Danforth Ave)
10. Natalie Richard's "Citizen Arepa" at Pomarosa (1504 Danforth Ave)
11. Sadia Fakhir's "It's Winking at You" at Red Rocket Coffee (1364 Danforth Ave)
12. Creative Works Studio's "ShiftScape" at Vilnes Hair Salon
13. Ryan Phyper's "Living Lights" outside of the Linsmore Tavern (1298 Danforth Ave)
14. Night Market / Info Centre, Green P Parking Lot, outside Coxwell Station

EAST DANFORTH'S NUIT BLANCHE 2019

image credit: Danforth Mosaic BIA

Case Study Kensington Market BIA

Building Trust & Embracing Change

Context & Local Community

Kensington Market BIA represents 240 businesses in the Kensington Market commercial areas roughly bounded by College, Bathurst, and Dundas, just west of Spadina (see map). The BIA was formed in 2009 and has 1 staff Coordinator.

The BIA has struggled with its relationship with the community and local businesses in the past. The BIA isn't generally well regarded in the neighbourhood which leads to a lack of trust with the membership and a general low level of engagement overall. Some of this is due to history – Board member disagreements, general animosity between different community groups and high BIA staff turnover – but the BIA is working to re-establish its relationships and relevance in the neighbourhood.

At the same time, there is a strong presence of community groups and agencies in the neighbourhood. This is best exemplified by the controversy that surrounded the proposed development of a Walmart just outside of the BIA's borders in 2013-2014. Two major community groups (not including the BIA) challenged this development, created a petition with over 92,500 signatures and successfully changed the proposal to exclude Walmart. The community also makes its presence felt around its desired vibe and

business mix in Kensington. As a result, the neighbourhood doesn't have many major chain shops and keeps a general creative and independent vibe.

Strategies & Issues

The BIA fully recognizes the potential of the BIA in advocating for local business issues and wants to work closer with community groups as there are many positions on which they align. To this end, the BIA has been focusing on relationship and trust building with its members – keeping them better informed of what's happening, reaching out, developing service and response standards, hosting open office hours, rebuilding the website to better inform on the BIA's work, being there to listen, and being conscious not to overstep where their work overlaps with others. This has led to an increase in engagement and participation.

Key issues they are working on include neighbourhood cleanliness, rodents and pests, upcoming redevelopment and ensuring that the history and values of the community are respected. As a tourist destination, Kensington doesn't have the same issues around attracting foot traffic as many other communities, but this also leads to many visitors who may not fully understand or respect the neighbourhood and its values/norms which is an issue of concern.

Staff are key. Hiring the right person, reducing turnover and aligning goals with staff capacity is important. Turnover for the BIA has also had an impact on implementation of strategic goals and overall brand development – in the past much of this ended up being done in a patchwork manner. Equally important is Board turnover. Cliques can form with board

members who have been around for a long time so it is always important to ensure that there are new members coming in.

Interesting, the BIA embraces neighbourhood change. Cultural turnover has always been part of Kensington's story – different ethnicities and cultures have moved through the neighbourhood over the years. The key has been to keep the general values and vibe of the neighbourhood alive - and maintain the eclecticism of the neighbourhood. The BIA sees their role in this as being a platform to ensure that the right kinds of business turn-overs happen. This is also the reason why redevelopment is a major concern for the BIA as new buildings can easily change the aesthetics, scale and vibe of the community.

